

Global Positioning System (GPS) Units

Supersedes:

Effective: 05-07-07

Boston EMS units are frequently called upon to provide emergency medical services outside of the City, or to provide medical monitoring or other operational and logistical support to neighboring agencies. A number of BEMS units will be equipped with global positioning system (GPS) navigation devices. These units may be useful when responding outside of our normal coverage area, to assist responding personnel who may be unfamiliar with the most direct route to an emergency scene within the City, or to assist routing to an unfamiliar hospital or staging area.

1. Security. Portable GPS units are cited by police agencies as among the most commonly stolen type of device from a vehicle. Department members are reminded to properly secure the vehicle whenever it is left unattended. To the extent possible, the unit should not be left in plain view when the vehicle is left unattended. As is the case with all department property, any loss or damage to the GPS unit should be immediately reported to a supervisor. The unit is placed in such a way so as not to obstruct the driver's view of the road or interfere with vehicle operating controls, such as the steering wheel, or gear shift selector. The unit should not be placed in the path of any installed airbag.
2. Operation. The GPS navigators feature a simple touchscreen interface, with automatic route calculation to any destination and turn-by-turn voice-prompted directions along the way. Selecting a destination is straightforward and requires only a limited amount of input from the user. The unit allows the user to choose between a three-dimensional navigation view or the more traditional "bird's eye" overhead view.
 - 2.1. When navigating, carefully compare information displayed on the unit to your existing district familiarity and all available navigation sources, including information from street signs, your visual observations, and maps or street guides. The unit is intended to provide route suggestions. It is not designed to replace the need for driver attentiveness regarding road closures or road conditions, traffic congestion, weather conditions, or other factors that may affect safety while driving.
 - 2.2. Always operate the vehicle in a safe manner. Do not become distracted by the GPS unit while driving, and always be fully aware of all driving conditions. Minimize the amount of time spent viewing the unit's screen while driving and use the voice prompts whenever possible. Do not input destinations, change settings, or access any of the functions requiring prolonged use of the unit's controls while driving. If the operator's partner is not available to input information, the operator should pull over in a safe manner before attempting such operations.

3. Maintenance. Clean the screen with water, isopropyl alcohol, or eyeglass cleaner; do not use cleaners containing ammonia, which can harm the coating on the screen. To the extent possible, do not leave the unit exposed to a heat source or in a high temperature location, such as in the sun in an unattended vehicle on a hot day.